

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

Background:

The Intermediary Project began in the fall of 1998 and established baseline criteria for sites applying to become members of a national Intermediary Network. In October 1999, the project hosted a Strategic Planning Institute where the 25 Network sites assessed their progress against the project's Stages and/or Functions tools. It was from those assessments that the sites developed strategic plans for the work and sustainability of their intermediaries.

Many Network sites, to this day, testify to the benefit of the assessment and planning process that was undertaken in Kansas City at the 1999 Institute. They continue to guide the organizational and collaborative development on awareness, discussions, plans, and commitments that were established as a result of that Institute.

In 2000 & 2001, the Network formally expanded to 50 sites, as well as supported the development of Intermediaries in several states. In an effort to support these Intermediary sites in their continued work and growth, the Network proposes to pursue an even more detailed self-assessment process at this time. After a great deal of research, we decided to utilize the nationally recognized PEPNet Self-Assessment model for our next round of self-examination.

Introduction:

The Intermediary Self-Assessment is a detailed tool that a group of your intermediary's core partners (both internal and external) can use to take a closer look at the intermediary's mission, management, functions and evidence of success. Using the self-assessment, intermediaries can learn what works, document successes, plan improvements, and share information. National and local policy makers will gain a clearer picture of the make-up of a quality intermediary, make more effective policy decisions, and improve how they assess and support intermediaries.

Conducting this Intermediary Self-Assessment will require a concerted effort over a period of time and the commitment of key leadership and staff and core partners from all levels of the intermediary. However, conducting the self-assessment has many potential benefits. It can:

- provide the opportunity to gather the core partners involved in your intermediary work for the purpose of assessing your efforts against a set of established criteria;
- engage the intermediary leadership, staff and core partners in an examination of the impact of the intermediary's work;
- assist in leadership and staff development;
- encourage and foster teamwork among intermediary leadership/management;
- document success; and
- effectively prepare a team for informed, high-quality work at the November Academy.

Included in this Document:

- Instructions & The Self-Assessment
- The Self-Assessment Planning Matrix

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

Instructions for the Intermediary Self-Assessment:

- ❑ Read through the Intermediary Self-Assessment questions from the bottom of this page through page 6. These questions are intended to prompt your thinking around the different components of the purpose, management and functions of the intermediary. It is **not** necessary for you to write out the answers to these questions. They should prepare you to complete the Self-Assessment Matrix.
 - ❑ After reading through the questions, go to the Self-Assessment Matrix on pages 7 - 10. Please fill in the boxes for "Progress", "Evidence" and "Challenges". Bring the completed matrix with you to the scheduled pre-Academy meeting. This is what you will share with the group at the meeting, and it will serve as the basis for our planning and discussion at the Intermediary Strategic Planning Academy scheduled November 28 - 29 at the Adams-Mark Airport, Indianapolis.
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The Intermediary Self-Assessment

I. Intermediary Purpose

Effective intermediaries have clear and well-understood aims and provide a coherent, well-organized set of functions to attain them.

(P1) Mission:

The organization (or collaborative of organizations) presents a clear and consistent mission.

- ❑ What purpose does the intermediary intend to accomplish and why?
- ❑ Does the current mission statement accurately reflect the purpose of the intermediary, who is served, and what outcomes are currently expected?
- ❑ Can local leaders, staff and board members accurately describe the intermediary's mission?

(P2) Target Stakeholders:

There is a logical and visible relationship between the intermediary's mission and its stakeholders.

- ❑ Is there a common vision that supports the intermediary's activities?
- ❑ Who are the intermediary's target stakeholders?

(P3) Activities:

The intermediary's mission shapes its structure and operations.

- ❑ How does the intermediary's structure support and accomplish its mission?
- ❑ How do all aspects and activities of the intermediary form a coherent, functional strategy?

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

II. Intermediary Management

Effective intermediaries are well managed, work in collaboration with others and are committed to continuous improvement.

(M1) Leadership:

The intermediary maintains a strong, engaged, and credible leadership.

- ☐ Is there buy-in from all core partners and an understanding of their purpose?
- ☐ How does the intermediary's leadership build community and other support?

(M2) Leadership and/or Staff Development:

The intermediary incorporates training and professional development as a management strategy.

- ☐ How do the intermediary's goals influence staffing, hiring, and evaluation of intermediary staff?
- ☐ How does the intermediary invest in appropriate leadership and staff development and training?

(M3) Collaboration:

The intermediary leverages resources through collaboration.

- ☐ What collaborative ties has the intermediary developed and what purpose does each serve?
- ☐ How does the intermediary and its mission relate to the larger community's goals and visions?

(M4) Resources:

The Intermediary attracts stable and diverse funding.

III. Intermediary Strategic Functions

A. Convene Local Leadership

Intermediaries bring together the key leaders in a community and provide a forum for ongoing dialogue and decision-making related to the implementation and long-term sustainability of community connections.

(CLL1) The intermediary has identified and engaged local leaders.

- ☐ To what extent have local leaders been engaged?
- ☐ What strategies does the intermediary pursue to foster strong engagement of its stakeholders?
- ☐ How regularly does the local leadership body convene regarding intermediary-specific issues?

(CLL2) The intermediary has developed a common vision amongst core partners.

- ☐ Is there a common community/region vision that has been built? What is it?
- ☐ To what extent has the intermediary convened the development of this community vision?

(CLL3) The intermediary has created a forum for building a system that connects schools and other youth serving institutions with workplaces and other community resources.

- ☐ What forums have been held to bring core partners together around issues of common concern?
- ☐ Is the strategy of connecting the above-mentioned stakeholders an ongoing activity?

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

B. Broker and Provide Services

Effective intermediaries perform or broker key operational functions, often through an entity or group of entities referred to as third-party brokers. They perform some or all of the following eight critical operational functions:

(BPS1) The intermediary ensures that employers and other workplace partners are actively engaged.

- ☐ What resources/expertise do your workplace partners contribute to workforce development?
- ☐ How does the intermediary do to recruit new and keep workplace partners involved?

(BPS2) The intermediary ensures that youth & teachers are connected to appropriate high quality learning experiences.

- ☐ What does your intermediary do to strengthen the connection between work and learning?
- ☐ What other organizations do you link with to provide preparation for youth to meet the high standards of careers and/or further education? In what ways?

(BPS3) The intermediary incorporates a wide range of strategies that instill youth development principles while insuring quality workplace experiences for all youth.

- ☐ How does the intermediary ensure that young people are prepared to enter the workplace?
- ☐ Does the intermediary incorporate any competencies based upon widely accepted standards?

C. Ensure Quality and Impact of Local Efforts

Effective intermediaries serve as the internal evaluators of the operations and impact of local efforts. They regularly review program performance and adjust strategies, as appropriate, to ensure success. Two kinds of indicators have been proposed by the Intermediary Network to measure intermediary effectiveness: indicators of intermediary impact, and indicators of the impact of local STC efforts in which the intermediary plays a role. This assessment category is intended to gauge if the intermediary has the capacity to conduct this type of impact assessment, not as a vehicle to collect the specific information.

(ES1) The intermediary measures impact regarding resources leveraged.

- ☐ Does the intermediary have a mechanism to collect and/or calculate wages paid to students in work-based learning experiences?
- ☐ Does the intermediary have the mechanism to collect and/or calculate different kinds of employer value-added contributions (instead of wages paid)?

(ES2) The intermediary measures impact through customer satisfaction survey results.

- ☐ Does the intermediary conduct a "workplace partner" customer satisfaction survey asking: does the customer think the value is good, the service effective? Youth customer satisfaction? School customer satisfaction?
- ☐ Does the intermediary use input from customer satisfaction surveys to leverage/build political support? For marketing purposes?

(ES3) The intermediary measures impact through the level of activity for youth & partners.

- ☐ Does the intermediary collect and report on the number of youth served? number of work-based learning placements annually? the number of employers, worksites, schools, etc.?
- ☐ Does the intermediary report on shifts of these measures on an annual basis?

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

(ES4) The intermediary measures impact of STC by collecting data on student educational success.

- ☐ Does the intermediary collect data on college-going rates? graduation rates/dropout rates?
- ☐ Does the intermediary collect data on pass rates for the state tests?

(ES5) The intermediary measures impact of School-to-Career by collecting data on student employment success.

- ☐ Does the intermediary collect data on the quality of employment after graduation for those who enter the labor market? (in wages, industry/occupation)

(EQI1) Descriptive Data:

The intermediary establishes key measures and success is measured against defined goals, outcomes and benchmarks.

- ☐ What day-to-day information does the intermediary use to manage its operations?
- ☐ How does the intermediary currently get this information? How is that data organized?
- ☐ What information do outside audiences of community partners, funders and key stakeholders use?

(EQI2) Comparative Measures:

The intermediary seeks sources of comparative information and data.

- ☐ Are there outside standards or benchmarks that can be applied in gauging intermediary impacts?
- ☐ What available sources of information would permit the intermediary to make useful comparisons of its results with similar intermediaries? How might the intermediaries compare?

(EQI3) Continuous Improvement:

The intermediary is committed to a continuous improvement strategy.

- ☐ How does the intermediary use information and data to plan, manage and improve?
- ☐ How are data shared among key stakeholders, leadership and staff?

D. Promote Policies to Sustain Effective Practices

(PP1) An effective intermediary documents and reports its findings to key stakeholders and the community at large.

(PP2) An effective intermediary conducts an on-going marketing and public relations campaign to promote public awareness regarding youth transition issues.

(PP3) The intermediary assists in the system-building strategies around programs and policies at the local, state and federal level.

(PP4) The intermediary assists in the overall coordination and connection of the local economic development and workforce development systems.

(PP5) The intermediary attracts stable and diverse funding.

- ☐ How does the intermediary ensure that funding levels are sustained?
- ☐ What different sources of financial and non-financial support does the intermediary utilize?

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

Setting the Stage:

Before you begin the Self-Assessment as a group, we strongly suggest that you have a discussion regarding the mission/purpose of your Intermediary. What do you want to accomplish overall for the community/region? What is the role of the Intermediary in that goal? Please discuss and record your conclusions before going further as a group with this work:

Overarching goal for the community/region:

Purpose of Intermediary in achieving that goal:

Self-Assessment Matrix

The following matrix is a tool to help you capture information as you work through the Self-Assessment questions. This matrix is an internal document that will help you complete the Self-Assessment—no one outside your collaboration/organization needs to see your results. We suggest using this matrix as a tool for your benefit—cut and paste, reprint, and reorganize the matrix to make it most useful to your specific needs.

This tool contains a chart for each of the three Intermediary categories, with each chart containing the criteria for that category. There is space to note 1) progress, 2) evidence of strengths and challenges identified for each criterion, 3) how you would rank this particular criterion as a priority, and 4) strategies and tactics in which you propose to engage regarding that criterion. This matrix is not intended to stand-alone; rather it is a companion tool to help organize and capture your thoughts as you complete the Self-Assessment. The results of this matrix will transfer directly to an Intermediary Strategic Planning document that you will complete at the Intermediary Strategic Planning Academy, November 28 & 29, 2001.

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

Self-Assessment Legend:

Progress:

= Not on our radar screen = Just started = Pretty far along in implementation or practice = Fully integrated into system

Priority:

= Low priority = Medium priority = High priority (limit number of high priorities per category to three)

Category I: Intermediary Purpose

Criteria	Progress	Evidence of Strengths	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(P1) The intermediary presents a clear & consistent mission.					
(P2) A logical & visible relationship exists between the intermediary's mission, activities & the core partners it serves.					
(P3) The intermediary's mission shapes its structure & operations.					

Category II: Intermediary Management

Criteria	Progress	Evidence of Strengths	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(M1) Intermediary maintains a strong, engaged, & credible leadership.					
(M2) Intermediary incorporates staff development as a management strategy.					
(M3) Intermediary leverages resources & impact through collaboration.					
(M4) Intermediary attracts stable & diverse funding.					

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

Category III: Intermediary Strategic Functions

III. A. Convene Local Leadership

Criteria	Progress	Evidence	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(CLL1) Intermediary has identified and engaged local leaders.					
(CLL2) Intermediary has developed a common vision among core partners.					
(CLL3) Intermediary has created a forum for building a system that connects schools & other youth serving institutions with workplaces and other community resources.					

III. B. Broker & Provide Services

Criteria	Progress	Evidence of Strengths	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(BPS1) Intermediary ensures that employers and other workplace partners are actively engaged.					
(BPS2) Intermediary ensures that youth & teachers are connected to appropriate high quality learning experiences.					
(BPS3) Intermediary incorporates a wide range of strategies that instills youth development principals while insuring quality workplace experiences for all youth.					

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

III. C. Ensure Quality & Impact of Local Efforts

Criteria	Progress	Evidence of Strengths	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(EQI1) Intermediary measures impact regarding resources leveraged.					
(EQI2) Intermediary measures impact through customer satisfaction survey results.					
(EQI3) Intermediary measures impact through the level of activity for youth & partners.					
(EQI4) Intermediary measures impact of STC by collecting data on student educational success.					
(EQI5) Intermediary measures impact of STC by collecting student employment success data.					
(EQI6) Intermediary establishes key measures and success is measured against defined goals, outcomes & benchmarks.					
(EQI7) Intermediary seeks sources of comparative info & data.					
(EQI8) Intermediary is committed to continuous improvement strategy.					

The Intermediary Self-Assessment

III. D. Promote Policies to Sustain Effective Practices

Criteria	Progress	Evidence of Strengths	Challenges	Priority	Strategies/Tactics
(PP1) Intermediary documents & reports its findings to key stakeholders and the community at large.					
(PP2) Intermediary conducts an on-going marketing & public relations campaign to promote public awareness regarding youth transition issues.					
(PP3) Intermediary assists in the system-building strategies around programs and policies at the local, state & federal level.					
(PP4) Intermediary assists in the overall coordination & connection of the local economic development & workforce development systems.					
(PP5) Intermediary attracts stable & diverse funding.					